

DRUG ABUSE AND THE LAW

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The history of drug abuse starts since the end of 19th century when the Chinese and Indians immigrants came to our country and brought along the habit of opium and ganja smoking. During those days, opium and ganja smoking was not an offence since it was not only as a means of relaxation but as remedy for various sickness especially among the old people.

However the following years showed an increase in the indiscriminately use of dangerous drugs. The number of identified drug addicts in our country now is 500,000 and recognising that drug addiction and trafficking have been increasing at an alarming rate, the Honourable Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad when launching the anti-drug campaign on February 19, 1983 has declared it as the country's number one enemy. Being the country's number one enemy, the Government has placed drug problem at the highest level of priority by declaring it a primary security concern and to be treated as a major threat to the national security.

I. THE STAR, February 20, 1983

The negative implications on the problem is being witnessed now in the form of moral decadence, neglect of social value and wasted energy of the youngsters and an increase rate of crime. This is so because drug addiction and trafficking have an intimate relationship with increase criminal activities, violence and intimidation.

The most regretful fact is that the main victims are the younger generations. Reports from Education Ministry show that 300 of the 1,122 secondary schools between 1983 and 1986 indicated that student involvement in drugs has reached critical level.² It is said that in the Federal Territory alone, about 10,000 youths are engaging in the illicit use of drugs.³ Younger generations should be freed from misused of drugs because they are the most valuable resource and the backbone of the country.

It is often said that a man who is depending on drugs is transforming himself into a living corpse. He will not only be useless to himself but also to others, Infact he is regarded as a burden to the society.

Drugs have made its victim losses his ability, freedom and the most valuable and important thing is his self-dignity. Once he has involved himself in drugs it is very difficult for him to

2. THE STAR, 'Drugs: The Battle Begins At Home', September 23, 1987.

3. Ibid.